

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 83

April 13, 1999, 4:45 p.m.  
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## BUDGET RESOLUTION/Instruction on Medicare & Prescription Drugs

**SUBJECT:** Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 2000-2009 . . . H.Con. Res. 68. Domenici motion to instruct conferees.

### ACTION: MOTION AGREED TO, 57-42

**SYNOPSIS:** As passed, H.Con.Res. 68, the Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 2000-2009: will cut the debt held by the public (money that the Federal Government owes to creditors other than itself) in half over 10 years; will save the entire \$1.8 trillion in Social Security surpluses over the next 10 years for Social Security; will fully fund Medicare, with annual funding doubling over 10 years (all of the President's proposed \$9 billion in Medicare cuts were rejected; as a result, this budget will allow \$20.4 billion more in Medicare spending over the next 10 years than proposed by the President); will provide for \$765.9 billion in net tax relief over the next 10 years (in contrast, the President's budget would increase the tax burden by \$96 billion net over 10 years), and will adhere to the spending restraints (discretionary spending caps and pay-go provisions) of the bipartisan budget agreement as enacted in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and the Taxpayer Reform Act of 1997 (the President's proposed budget, in contrast, would dramatically increase spending in violation of that bipartisan agreement, and would result in \$2.2 trillion more in total Federal debt at the end of 10 years than proposed in this Senate budget). After tax relief is provided, the on-budget surplus over 10 years will still be \$101 billion; that money will be available for additional debt reduction or to pay for high priority items, such as the costs of a Medicare reform bill or the costs of emergency spending.

**The Domenici motion to instruct conferees** would instruct conferees to insist on retaining in the conference report the Roth/Breaux amendment (see vote No. 65) regarding Medicare reform and the Snowe/Wyden amendment (adopted in the Budget Committee before the budget resolution reached the Senate floor) regarding the use of on-budget surpluses to provide a Medicare prescription drug benefit.

**Those favoring** the motion to instruct contended:

(See other side)

YEAS (57)		NAYS (42)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (55 or 100%)	Democrats (2 or 5%)	Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (42 or 95%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Breaux	Akaka	Johnson	
Allard	Hutchison	Kerrey	Baucus	Kennedy	
Ashcroft	Inhofe		Bayh	Kerry	
Bennett	Jeffords		Biden	Kohl	
Bond	Kyl		Bingaman	Landrieu	
Brownback	Lott		Boxer	Lautenberg	
Bunning	Lugar		Bryan	Leahy	
Burns	Mack		Byrd	Levin	
Campbell	McCain		Cleland	Lieberman	
Chafee	McConnell		Conrad	Lincoln	
Cochran	Murkowski		Daschle	Mikulski	
Collins	Nickles		Dodd	Murray	
Coverdell	Roberts		Dorgan	Reed	
Craig	Roth		Durbin	Reid	
Crapo	Santorum		Edwards	Robb	
DeWine	Sessions		Feingold	Rockefeller	
Domenici	Shelby		Feinstein	1—Official Business	
Enzi	Smith, Bob		Graham	2—Necessarily Absent	
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon		Harkin	3—Illness	
Frist	Snowe		Hollings	4—Other	
Gorton	Specter		Inouye	Wyden	
Gramm	Stevens				
Grams	Thomas				
Grassley	Thompson				
Gregg	Thurmond				
Hagel	Voinovich				
Hatch	Warner				
Helms					

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business  
2—Necessarily Absent  
3—Illness  
4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea  
AN—Announced Nay  
PY—Paired Yea  
PN—Paired Nay

The Senate-passed budget resolution did three very important things for Medicare. First, it rejected the President's proposed cuts in Medicare. Second, it fully funded Medicare for the next 10 years, so that full funding for all benefits will be provided even as the number of people receiving Medicare grows rapidly. In fact, the total amount spent each year on Medicare will more than double. Third, it created a reserve fund that will allow the use of more than \$100 billion in on-budget surpluses to be used to pay for Medicare reform costs. Democrats do not like that proposal. They like the President's idea of cutting spending on Medicare now and giving the program a lot of Treasury note IOUs which, if they are ever redeemed, will have to be redeemed by collecting new money in taxes or by borrowing money (the third option, cutting other spending, would never be approved by Democrats).

Specific parts of the budget resolution include a Roth/Breaux amendment that commits the Senate to working on passing, this year, a bipartisan Medicare reform bill, such as the proposal that was developed by the Bipartisan Medicare Reform Commission, and a Snowe/Wyden amendment that authorizes the use of the on-budget surplus to provide new Medicare prescription drug benefits as part of Medicare reform. The pending Domenici motion to instruct would tell Senate conferees to insist on retaining those bipartisan proposals.

Unfortunately, the President and many liberal Democratic Senators have yet to show any interest in finding a real solution to Medicare's problems. Instead, they continue to argue for a gimmick solution that they know Republicans will not accept. They are not being constructive--they are just playing politics. We urge our liberal colleagues to stop playing partisan games with Medicare. Bipartisan approaches have been suggested, and Republican Senators, with their votes, have proven they are more concerned with fixing Medicare than playing politics with the issue. If Democratic Senators stop their political games, we are convinced real and lasting Medicare reform is possible this year.

**Those opposing the motion contended:**

If Medicare is going to be saved it is going to need a lot more money. The number of Medicare recipients is growing so rapidly that the program will be insolvent, according to the most recent figures, in 2015 (the estimate was just moved up from 2008 because continued economic growth has resulted in higher than expected Medicare payroll tax collections, and that growth is expected to continue). If no reforms are made, and if we want Medicare to last 12 more years than 2015, then we will have to add an extra \$688 billion from the general fund into Medicare. The President proposed making that transfer, but our Republican colleagues refused, even though the United States will collect more than that amount in extra taxes over the next 10 years. Our Republican colleagues refused because they want to use the money to give new tax breaks to their rich friends. They have designed a budget resolution that does not add anything to the Medicare trust fund. It will allow the on-budget surplus (which will not even begin to accumulate for 5 years) to be used for Medicare reform, but that is a small concession. Much more must be done. The pending Domenici motion basically asks us to endorse the Republican approach of doing little to save Medicare at the same time as we give big tax breaks to rich Americans. We will not endorse that approach, and thus oppose this motion.